

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The link system 10 has a bar 11 which extends between two generally parallel spinal rods ~~50 and 51~~ , only rod 51 is shown. The bar 11 has two connectors 12 and 13 that are placed over the rods to hold the cross link in place along the length of the rods. Connector 12 has a groove 14 which is transverse to the longitudinal axis of the bar 11. The groove 14 has upstanding sides 16 and 18. A channel 20 is formed in upstanding wall 18. The channel 20 is a discontinuity in the side wall 18 and exposes a portion of the actuator arm ~~22~~ 23. The upstanding wall 16 is reinforced with a thickened ridge 24 along the outer surface of the groove 14.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The end of the lock opposite the slot 32 has a retainer ~~38~~ 39 formed as a flange on the cam surface. As the cam 36 engages the spinal rod the retainer rotates under the spinal rod preventing displacement of the rod from the groove 14.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A piston 70, shown in Figs. 4 and 5, has a body 71 of such dimensions to be inserted into bore 67. On one end of the piston body 71 diametrically opposed flanges 72 and 73 extend beyond the thickness of the body. The flanges 72 and 73 have a width commensurate with the diameter of the shaft ~~62~~ 61. In operation, the flanges 72 and 73 contact the reduced thickness portion 64 of the shaft and the ends 74 and 75 cooperate with shoulders 66 and 68 to divert shear forces acting along the longitudinal axis of bar 11.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 13, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A bifurcated pin 76, shown in Fig. 6, has an enlarged head 77 and upstanding ends 78,79. The upstanding ends are separated by a distance to allow the reduced diameter portion of end of shaft ~~62~~ 61 and the piston 70 to be disposed therebetween, as shown in Fig. 4. The upstanding ends 78, 79 may have external threads 80, or be internally threaded or both. The pin 76 and the piston 70 may be pre-assembled with the shaft 62 for simplicity and to reduce the number of separate components within the surgical field.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 20, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Once the shafts 61 and 62 are overlapped, the pin 76 and piston 70 are inserted into bore 67 and a fastener 81 is connected to the upstanding ends 78 and ~~78~~ 79 to complete the assembly of the cross link system. The fastener 81 is similar in construction to key52. However, the fastener may be internally threaded, as shown, or externally threaded to mated with threads on the upstanding ends and/or with internal threads in the bore 67.